TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION!
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

CHCs and Historic Cemeteries: A Framework for Preservation
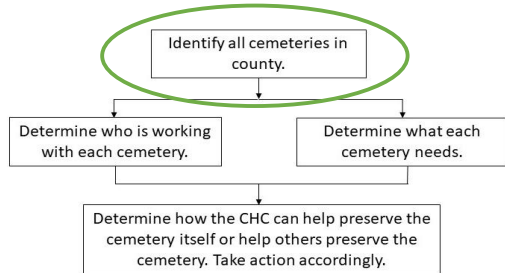
Part 1: Identify

1

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION!
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

A Suggested Framework for County-Wide Cemetery Preservation

Identify all cemeteries in county.

Determine who is working with each cemetery.

Determine what each cemetery needs.

Determine how the CHC can help preserve the cemetery itself or help others preserve the cemetery. Take action accordingly.

www.thc.texas.gov/chc-cemeteries

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION!
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

A Suggested Framework for County-Wide Cemetery Preservation

IDENTIFICATION
- Foundation for any type of preservation plan
- Produces information useful to planning agencies
- Emphasizes a county-wide approach
- Stimulates public awareness
- Aligns with CHC's statutory assignments (Local Gov't Code Chapter 318)
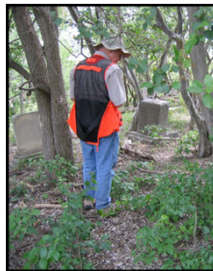
3

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Suggested Activities

CHCs know how many cemeteries exist in the county and where they are located.

- Maintain an inventory of known cemeteries.
- Review and update this inventory regularly.
- Review the THC Historic Sites Atlas to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- File an Existence of Cemetery Form or Notice of Unverified Cemetery and add the cemetery to the county inventory of cemeteries, as appropriate.
- Share locational data with local planning offices and mapping departments.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

Compile a master list of every cemetery ever known to exist in the county and then go out and physically locate each one.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

A team is a combination of
<u>Researchers</u> and <u>Explorers</u>
<u>Gatherers and Enterers</u>

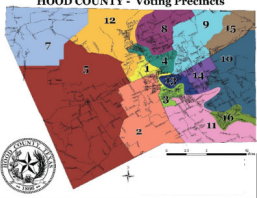Everyone has something to offer

All age groups can be included

6

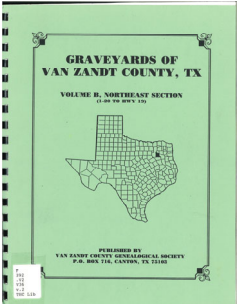HOOD COUNTY - Voting Precincts

Divide and Conquer

Western   Central   Eastern

7

**Start with previous inventories!
Use Caution!**

- Who compiled it and when?
- What information was available to them then?
- Is it inclusive?
- Is it specific? Is there a map? Directions?

GRAVEYARDS OF
VAN ZANDT COUNTY, TX
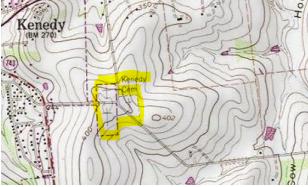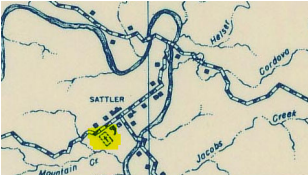
VOLUME II, NORTHEAST SECTION
(I-20 TO HWY 19)

PUBLISHED BY
VAN ZANDT COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 716, CANTON, TX 75103

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MAPS
- County road maps
- State highway maps
- USGS topos
- Soil maps
- Water maps
- All date ranges!

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

- Funeral homes and monument makers (especially retired workers)
- Death records and obituaries
- Church records

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

DEEDS
- Indices not usually helpful
- Look at the surrounding/adjacent properties
- More info in Module 2

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

People! - "old-timers," land surveyors, timber assessors, oil and gas gaugers, landmen, title companies, rural mail carriers, agricultural lease holders, hunters, etc.

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What info to collect?
- Name
- AKA
- Location

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- # of Graves
- Dates of use
- Size
- Ownership
- Contact Info
- Deeds
- Condition
- Date visited
- Etc., etc.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

How to collect the info?

- Consider your group's skills and abilities
- Electronic: spreadsheets, databases, GIS
- Paper-based and hybrids

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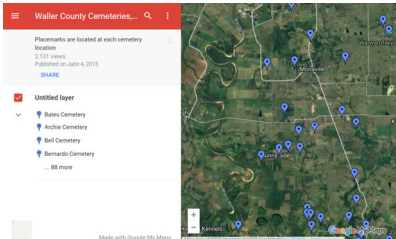**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Create and maintain an inventory

What to do with the info?

- Update it regularly
- Keep it safe
- Make duplicates
- Make it accessible

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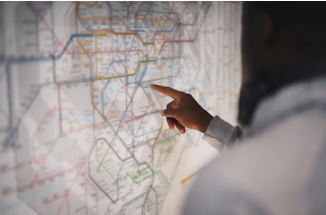---

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
Share locations with planning & mapping depts.

- Municipal, County GIS Departments
- County Appraisal Districts (parcel maps)
- Subdivision Plat Review Board
- Road and Bridge Departments
- Water Improvement Districts
- Municipal Utility Districts
- Planning and Zoning
- 9-1-1 Addressing
- Others

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20

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

Cemeteries can be "discovered…"

• due to imminent threat or

• through a proactive, systematic search

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

Texas Health and Safety Code 711.011 (excerpt)

A person who discovers an unknown or abandoned cemetery shall file notice of the discovery of the cemetery with the county clerk of the county in which the cemetery is located and concurrently mail notice to the landowner

**links to full text of law on THC website

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

Health and Safety Code 711.001 Definitions

"Abandoned cemetery" means a cemetery, regardless of whether it appears on a map or in deed records, that is not owned or operated by a cemetery organization, does not have another person legally responsible for its care, and is not maintained by any person.

"Unknown cemetery" means an abandoned cemetery evidenced by the presence of marked or unmarked graves that does not appear on a map or in deed records.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

- File within 10 days of discovery
- Notify the landowner (CAD)
- Include legal description
- Include evidence

- File with county clerk (no charge)
- Detailed instructions and samples on THC website

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

HOME · ABOUT US · PRESERVE · PROJECT REVIEW · NEWS & EVENTS · EDUCATION · HIST

Home › Preserve › Projects and Programs › Cemetery Preservation › Discovery and Notice of Existence

Discovery and Notice of Existence

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

Texas Health and Safety Code 711.0111 (excerpt)

A person who discovers an unverified cemetery shall file notice and evidence of the discovery with the Texas Historical Commission […], and shall concurrently provide a copy of the notice to the landowner

**links to full text of law on THC website

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

Health and Safety Code 711.001 Definition

"Unverified cemetery" means a location having some evidence of interment but in which the presence of one or more unmarked graves has not been verified by a person described by Section 711.0105(a) or by the Texas Historical Commission.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

IDENTIFY:
File notices of newly-discovered cemeteries

- Detailed instructions and samples on THC website (must use THC form)
- Notify THC
- Notify the landowner (CAD)
- Include evidence
- Landowner can respond to THC
- THC evaluates and takes action depending on whether a cemetery's existence is verified or not

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

A Suggested Framework for County-Wide Cemetery Preservation

Next: Connect!

Identify all cemeteries in county.

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www.thc.texas.gov/chc-cemeteries

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Cemetery Preservation Program

www.thc.texas.gov/cemetery

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